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ABSTRACT

The retailers' concern about shoplifting and shoplifting losses provided impetus for the development of this programed text. The self-instructional booklet is designed for all retail employees as an aid to preventing financial losses to the store caused by shoplifting. The common characteristics of shoplifters, methods used by shoplifters, and a method of apprehending shoplifters are examples of topics included in the text. (VA)

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SHOPLIFTING

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PREVENTION

Programmed Instruction

SHOPLIFTING PREVENTION

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INTRODUCTION

Shoplifting and shoplifting losses are of major concern to retailer's all across the nation. Large, metropolitan department stores as well as smaller specialty shops in rural communities are being plagued by this profit killer. No store is immune to shoplifting losses.

It is the direct responsibility of every employee in a retail store to understand the causes of shoplifting, learn who is doing the shoplifting, and learn how to prevent them in their store. Shoplifting losses contribute to net loss of the store, in which case the sales staff is reduced or in extreme cases the store must close. Every employee must do all that he can to reduce shoplifting losses and to help save his job.

This booklet is designed to acquaint you, as a retail employee, with the facts about shoplifting. The sole purpose here is to help you prevent shoplifting losses in your store. As a result, you will be helping to save your job.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This course is written in a format known as "programmed instruction". Although it is not a test, you will be asked to answer true-false questions. Check the answer you feel appropriate and read the answer on the page. Having read the information, fill-in the blanks to the question at the bottom of the page. Once completed, turn the page where you will find the correct answers and a new question for you to answer.

So read carefully, answer the questions, and review if you become confused. You'll find this form of learning enjoyable and easy to use because you can work at your own speed.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Through the study of the material contained in this manual, the student will learn that shoplifting is of utmost concern to retailers.
2. The student will be aware of the different types of shoplifters.
3. The student will learn why people shoplift.
4. The student will learn ways the retail employee can combat shoplifting losses.
5. The student will become aware of the methods used by shoplifters.
6. The student will learn the Ohio law pertaining to shoplifters.
7. The student will learn a method of apprehending shoplifters.
8. The student will learn when shoplifters strike.
9. The student will learn common characteristics of shoplifters.

QUESTION

Shoplifting losses are of only minor concern to retailers in the United States today?

_____ True _____ False

Shoplifting losses amount to millions of dollars a day nationally with losses set somewhere between $4-6 billion dollars a year. Shoplifting losses have increased over 500% in recent years. It has been directly responsible for the closing of many stores and responsible also for many lost jobs of salespeople who felt that shoplifting was not important.

If every person in this nation equally shared this loss, it would cost each of us about $25 per year, and an average family about $100 per year.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #1

Nationally, shoplifting losses cost retailers between _____ dollars. Shoplifting has increased over _____ in recent years.

ANSWER TO #1: $4-6 Billion
500% increase

QUESTION

Most shoplifters usually steal high-price merchandise?

_____ True _____ False

Most shoplifters steal very in-expensive items because these items are usually small and easy to conceal. Popular items to steal are health-and-beauty aids such as lip-stick, make-up, hair-spray, etc. Amateur shoplifters stick to these types of goods, whereas professionals like to steal high-price goods which they can "fence" (sell to a third party) for cash. Because of professionals, the average value of shoplifted goods has risen to $28.00. Since 1960, all shoplifting has increased 500%.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #2

The majority of shoplifting thefts are _____ -priced items. However, the average value of goods stolen nationally is _____.

ANSWER TO #2: Small or low priced items
$ 28.00 on the average

QUESTION

Expensive or small items left on display counters or in unlocked display cases are easy prey for shoplifters?

_____ True _____ False

By placing expensive items on display cases or leaving them in unlocked cases, you are inviting a shoplifter to strike. When possible, keep these items in locked cases and away from the edge of the counter.

Shoplifters like crowded first floors, sales counters with piles of merchandise, and articles displayed near exits. Avoid these problem areas in your store.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #3

Display cases should be _____ to control the shoplifting of expensive items from them. Also, keeping _____ _____ on the edge of the display case is bad practice.

ANSWER TO #3: Locked, closed, etc.
Expensive Merchandise

****

QUESTION

A person who feels a compulsion toward stealing is called a kleptomaniac?

_____ True _____ False

Kleptomania is a tragedy to those so afflicted. This disease creates in the person a strong desire to steal which seldom can be controlled by the person, so the answer is true.

Thefts by kleptomaniacs stem from psychological compulsion. The term is a combination of the Greek word for thief, "kleptes", and the word maniac. Often kleptomaniacs do not need the items they pick up. But even so, their behavior is no less costly to the store.

Physiological factors also account for women succumbing at times to desire to steal. Nervous tension and emotional problems sometimes bring about kleptomania.

Kleptomaniacs are very careful in preparing for the theft. In fact, the exaggerated care with which they work is generally what attracts attention to them.

When the eyes of this type are detained, their indifference is very marked. Often they are members of respected and wealthy families, and settlement of this case to them means merely paying for the merchandise.

However, kleptomaniacs account for less than 1% of the total shoplifting, nationally.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #4

_____ is a serious disease that is psychologically caused or physiologically caused. Because kleptomania is a disease, these shoplifters are sometimes allowed to _____ instead of being prosecuted.

ANSWER TO #4: Kleptomania
Repay the store / pay for the stolen merchandise

QUESTION

Professional shoplifters account for the largest percentage of dollar losses attributable to shoplifting?

_____ True _____ False

Although fewer in number than amateurs, a "pro" can steal more than numerous amateur shoplifters.

The professional shoplifter steals for profit and is the type most costly to retailers. Because he must live on the results of his pilferage, the professional is highly skilled. He is the most difficult to detect and apprehend because he works with extreme confidence and nonchalance. Professional shoplifters know what to take; they steal expensive merchandise that can be converted easily into cash. Since the professionals are attracted to expensive items, the best protection is to keep this type of merchandise under cover. The answer to the question is true.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #5

_____ shoplifters account for the majority of the shoplifting losses.

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ANSWER TO # 6: Women

QUESTION

Shoplifters, or persons to suspect of shoplifting, may have common characteristics that retail salespeople should observe?

_____ True _____ False

SALESPEOPLE SHOULD WATCH THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE OR CHARACTERISTICS:

1. Loose, baggy clothes.
2. Loosely folded umbrellas, shopping bags and folded newspapers.
3. Women with open handbags dangling from an arm, while holding change purse in plain view.
4. Intoxicated customers.
5. Baby carriages wheeled through the store.
6. Customers who attempt to engage you in conversation to divert your attention. Such people are often accompanied by partners who will pilfer while your attention is diverted.
7. Persons wearing unseasonable clothing such as heavy coats on warm and sunny days or raincoats on sunny days.
8. Persons carrying unwrapped merchandise in unrelated areas.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #7

Salespeople should be wary of customers who walk around with _____ purses, or strange clothing such as _____ on a hot, sunny day.

ANSWER TO #7: Open
Raincoats or Umbrellas

****

QUESTION:

Not all stolen merchandise is concealed by the shoplifter?

_____ True _____ False

Price switching is a common technique used by shoplifters to buy expensive merchandise for lower prices. Be certain to know the prices on all of your merchandise.

Many bold or brave shoplifters will carry or wear the merchandise they have just stolen out of the store. They figure that no one will question them on the merchandise since "no one would be so stupid to have stolen merchandise in plain view." Merchandise stolen like this includes umbrellas, hats, luggage, and sporting goods which appear too obvious. Many times salespeople assume that the customer has paid for the merchandise and do not ask them to see their sales receipt.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #8

_____ is a technique used by shoplifters who intend to pay for their merchandise. The best technique you can use to stop this is to _____. Also many bold shoplifters _____ or _____ their stolen merchandise out of the store in plain view.

ANSWER TO #8: Price-switching
Know your merchandise
Wear or carry

****

QUESTION

The shoplifter who is about to strike never keeps his eyes on the merchandise he is about to steal?

_____ True _____ False

The hand is quicker than the eye is a statement the magicians have always used to do their act, and it is being used today by shoplifters. The professional shoplifter keeps his eyes on the salesman to see if he is being watched while he positions the merchandise he is about to steal.

Placing a shopping bag or booster box next to the merchandise, the shoplifter watches the salesman for the proper time to place the merchandise into the bag or box. The shoplifter needs only seconds to steal merchandise from a non-observant salesman. Watch for "Customers" who watch you while handling the merchandise. Keep an eye on this person and give him plenty of attention to scare him off.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #9

While the hands are at work, shoplifters watch the _____ instead of the _____ to see if he is being _____.

ANSWER TO #9: Salesperson
Merchandise
Watched

QUESTION

Fitting rooms are a common place for shoplifting losses to take place?

_____ True _____ False

Fitting rooms are excellent places for stealing merchandise. A variety of techniques are used. Many shoplifters wear stolen goods under their own out of the stores. Another technique is to leave merchandise in fitting rooms for a partner to steal when he goes in.

Occasional surveillance of fitting rooms has proven effective in curtailing this method of shoplifting. Recent court decisions have confirmed the legality of surveillance when done by store personnel, so the answer to the above question is true.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #10

Because of carelessness on the part of store personnel, many shoplifting losses take place in _____. One device that can be used to curb losses here is _____.

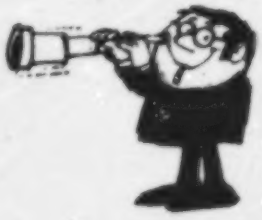
ANSWER TO #10: Fitting rooms
Surveillance

QUESTION

During opening, closing, and lunch hours, shoplifters are likely to strike because of a lack of salespeople or tired, inefficient salespeople?

_____ True _____ False

This is true. Holidays, when shopping is heavier, offer increased opportunities for shoplifters, as do luncheon and dinner hours and shift changes when few salespeople are on duty. Shoplifters, like other thieves often watch a place for days in advance to become familiar with a store's schedule and operations. Shoplifters can spot when the salespeople on duty are busy or tired. Given enough privacy by a tired or busy salesperson, the shoplifter can strike. Shoplifters need only the opportunity and merchandise to steal to commit their crime.



CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #11

Since there are _____ salespeople on duty during these times, shoplifters like to strike during _____ and _____.

ANSWER TO #11: Fewer
Meal hours and shift changes.

****

QUESTION:

Many amateur shoplifters justify their actions by saying: "The store will never miss this small, in-expensive item."

_____ True _____ False

Most people do not understand the small profit margin that many stores operate on. For example, many supermarkets operate on a 1% profit margin which means they clear only 1¢ on every $1.00 of sales brought into the store. Hence, the shoplifter who steals a 79¢ item is forcing the store to sell $79.00 worth of merchandise at no profit to cover the loss of this single stolen item. Many shoppers feel that stores are making huge profits and they can justify their actions by believing that small items stolen will not be missed by the store and will not hurt the profit of the store.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #12

With profit margins so small, even small in-expensive items will be missed by the store. In supermarkets, profit margins are about _____% so an item that retails for 99¢ that is stolen will require more than _____ in sales at no profit to recover the loss.

ANSWER TO #12: 1
$99.00

****

QUESTION:

Most things stolen by shoplifters are things that they need for their survival or well-being of their family?

_____ True _____ False

This statement cannot be blanket-answered because of the difference in people who shoplift. The thrill-seeking shoplifter usually has no particular desire or need for the merchandise, but steals simply for the thrill of taking a risk. Causes of the act may be a desire to "show-off" or the acceptance of a dare. Only extra vigilance on the part of the merchant and his salespeople can cut down on this type of pilfering.

People of limited means, needing something for themselves, their children, or their homes, sometimes rebel against the fates that force them to exist on an inadequate income and yield to temptation. A desire for beauty often prompts women to become shoplifters of cosmetics, costume jewelry, and other personal accessories, especially when they find the cost of good grooming out of their reach. Also, this group of shoplifters are likely to shoplift food and clothing that are necessary for their survival or the survival of their children. It is interesting to note that 99% of those apprehended for shoplifting have enough money with them to pay for the stolen merchandise.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #13

The thrill-seeking shoplifter usually has no particular _____ for the merchandise taken. Thus a salesperson cannot expect only _____ customers to be shoplifting suspects.

ANSWER TO #13: Need
Poor, poorly dressed, lower income, etc.

****

QUESTION:

Many times, honest people steal goods from stores because they feel the store owes them something for continued patronage or because of higher prices?

_____ True _____ False

Many shoplifters can rationalize their actions by feeling that the store owes them something because of their steady shopping at the store and their loyalty over the years. This is true of many women shoppers in supermarkets. Having shopped at a store every week for years, a woman may feel that the store will not miss a small item, and besides, the store owes her something for shopping there. Many of the thefts under these circumstances are luxury food items or health and beauty aids for herself. The woman will put the item in her purse where it is very hard to detect, so the answer to the question is true.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #14

The feeling that the store owes them something drives many _____ to shoplifting. This thought process is called _____.

ANSWER TO #14: Honest people
Rationalization

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QUESTION:

Most state laws permit retailers to hold a person inside or outside the store for the purpose of recovering an article he believes has been stolen or in order to cause the arrest of the person?

_____ True _____ False

Ohio law says such detention can be made provided there is "probable cause" for believing a theft has been committed; that the detention is "without search" and without using "undue restraint"; that detention must be in a "reasonable manner" and that it must be for a "reasonable length of time."

The courts have held that requiring a suspected shoplifter to return to the store constitutes an arrest. This gives rise to a rule that has no exceptions: If no confession is obtained, the apprehended shoplifter must be prosecuted. Failure to do so exposes the store to a lawsuit.

A signed confession by a shoplifter must be obtained without intimidation, threat, coercion, or promise of any kind. Requirements binding law enforcement officers, such as advising the subject of the right to consult an attorney, do not apply to store personnel.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #15

State laws mostly encourage retailers to _____ persons who are apprehended for shoplifting.

ANSWER TO #15: Prosecute

* * * \

ANSWER TO #16: Misdemeanor
6 months
$1,000.00
Felony
5 years
$2,500.00

****

QUESTION:

One of the duties of a salesperson is to help reduce shoplifting losses in their store?

_____ True _____ False

Many store employees feel that it is not their responsibility to be on guard against shoplifters. They feel that it is too dangerous and they don't want to get involved. It is dangerous to try to stop some shoplifters, but many times just offering good service will scare away many amatuer shoplifters.

Many salespeople feel it is the responsibility of security people and/or management to detect shoplifters. All salespeople should observe customers in order to detect shoplifters. With shoplifting losses responsible for the closing of many stores, think of this duty as a way of insuring your job. Be sure you know your store's policy on handling known or suspected shoplifters.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #17

It is the duty of _____ to guard against shoplifters by observing customers' actions.

ANSWER TO #17: Salespeople

****

QUESTION:

Treating "just looking shoppers" as customers can help to reduce shoplifting?

_____ True _____ False

Many "just looking" customers are actually just looking, but many shoplifters use this line to send salespeople away to wait on another customer who may be interested in buying something. Even if a cusotmer says he is "just looking" keep an eye on him. If he is indeed a customer, you will be able to answer any questions he might have. If he is a shoplifter, the extra attention will scare him off.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #18

When a customer says he is just looking you should:

_____ a. Continue trying to sell him something.

_____ b. Wait on another customer.

_____ c. Wait on another customer but keep him in view.

Many _____ use this statement to avoid _____ by the salesperson.

ANSWER TO #18: C
Shoplifters
Attention

QUESTION:

Store salespeople should stop any person they suspect of shoplifting?

_____ True _____ False

Stopping people you suspect of shoplifting or accusing them of shoplifting is very risky. Such actions may open the store to counts of slander and/or false arrest if the individual decides to sue the store. Many people have made a living by doing just this; going through the actions of shoplifting, being accused in front of a pre-arranged witness, and then sueing the store for making slanderous accusations against them.

Salespeople should contact store detectives or management personnel when they suspect someone of shoplifting, so the answer to the question is false.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #19

Store salespeople should contact _____ or _____ when they suspect someone of shoplifting.

ANSWER TO #19: Store detectives
Management

QUESTION:

A store policy of not prosecuting apprehended shoplifters increases the likelihood of shoplifting in the store?

_____ True _____ False

Prosecuting apprehended shoplifters is sometimes a difficult decision to make. Many stores are happy just to get their merchandise back and then stores free the shoplifter. Not prosecuting the shoplifter can lead them to continue their stealing from the store or other stores. Prosecuting shoplifters can lead them to think twice about continuing their thefts, so the answer is true.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #20

_____ shoplifters is one way to make them stop their stealing. _____ them may lead them to continue their act.

ANSWER TO #20: Prosecuting
Not prosecuting

QUESTION:

Electronic devices such as cameras, sensory tapes, and electronic eyes are effective in stopping shoplifting?

_____ True _____ False

True, to a point. Clever and professional shoplifters are aware of these devices and can determine ways to beat them, such as price switching. Cameras cannot focus on everyone and shoplifters know it. They may simply wait for the angle on the camera to be away from them to steal. These electronic devices are expensive and do scare many amateur shoplifters, but seldom are they effective against the professional. The best device to use against shoplifters remains alert, friendly service from a knowledgeable salesperson.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #21

_____ shoplifters may be scared-off by cameras and the rest of the electronic devices. However, the best device to use against shoplifters is _____.

ANSWER TO #21: Amateur
Alert - Friendly service

QUESTION:

One of the best ways for store salespeople to use to help combat shoplifting losses is to offer alert and friendly service to all people who enter the department or the store.

_____ True _____ False

To commit his act, the shoplifter needs an opportunity to steal and the merchandise to steal. By giving all customers alert, friendly service, you can do much to prevent shoplifting. Acknowledge all customers as they walk into the department or store even though you may be busy with one customer at the time. To the shopper, this means good service . . . to the shoplifter it means, "I'm watching you." Remember that the shoplifter needs only the opportunity to steal and the merchandise to steal to commit his act. Since you cannot, in most cases, deprive him of the merchandise, deprive him of the opportunity to steal by giving good service.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #22

Since shoplifters need _____ _____ to steal and the _____ to steal; alert, friendly service can do much to stop shoplifting.

ANSWER TO #22: Merchandise
Opportunity

QUESTION:

Security experts in the area of shoplifting prevention state that half the losses by shoplifters can be stopped if store procedures was tightened and strictly adhered to?

_____ True _____ False

Small businesses suffer more from shoplifters than large ones, although they have a much smaller percentage of total sales nationally. Businesses with 30% of the nation's sales reported 68% of the shoplifting losses.

Much shoplifting could be avoided if these store procedures were strictly followed:

1. Use alert, aggressive salesmanship at all times.
2. Place expensive items behind counters or in a closed display case.
3. Keep aisles clear.
4. When possible, keep items away from the edge of the counter.
5. Check dressing rooms often for clothing left by customers.
6. Check merchandise as you write up the order. Look for ticket switching and concealment of additional merchandise inside merchandise the

customer is buying. Know your merchnadise.

7. Be especially alert during opening, closing, and lunch hours.
8. Give all customers plenty of attention.
9. Beware of loosely-wrapped parcels which could have false openings.
10. Never leave your section unattended.

CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE FACT - #23

It would appear that _____ businesses particularly need to look at shoplifting prevention. Some special procedures to consider are:

- Give customers plenty of _____.
- Place expensive merchandise _____.
- Good Sales Techniques protect your store from _____ profits.

ANSWER TO #23: Small Businesses

Attention
Undercover/inside display case
Loss of

****

Suggested Projects

Now that you have looked at the problems of shoplifting you may wish to develop a program to help control the problem in your community. There are many people in your area who could benefit from knowing more about shoplifting prevention and the law. Consider:

* Developing a small pamphlet explaining the shoplifting laws in your state.

* Put on a program for your local junior high students and in the elementary schools.

* Develop a shoplifting prevention plan to use in your school store or to present to a local retailer.

* Prepare a program to present to the PTA or other interested women's groups.